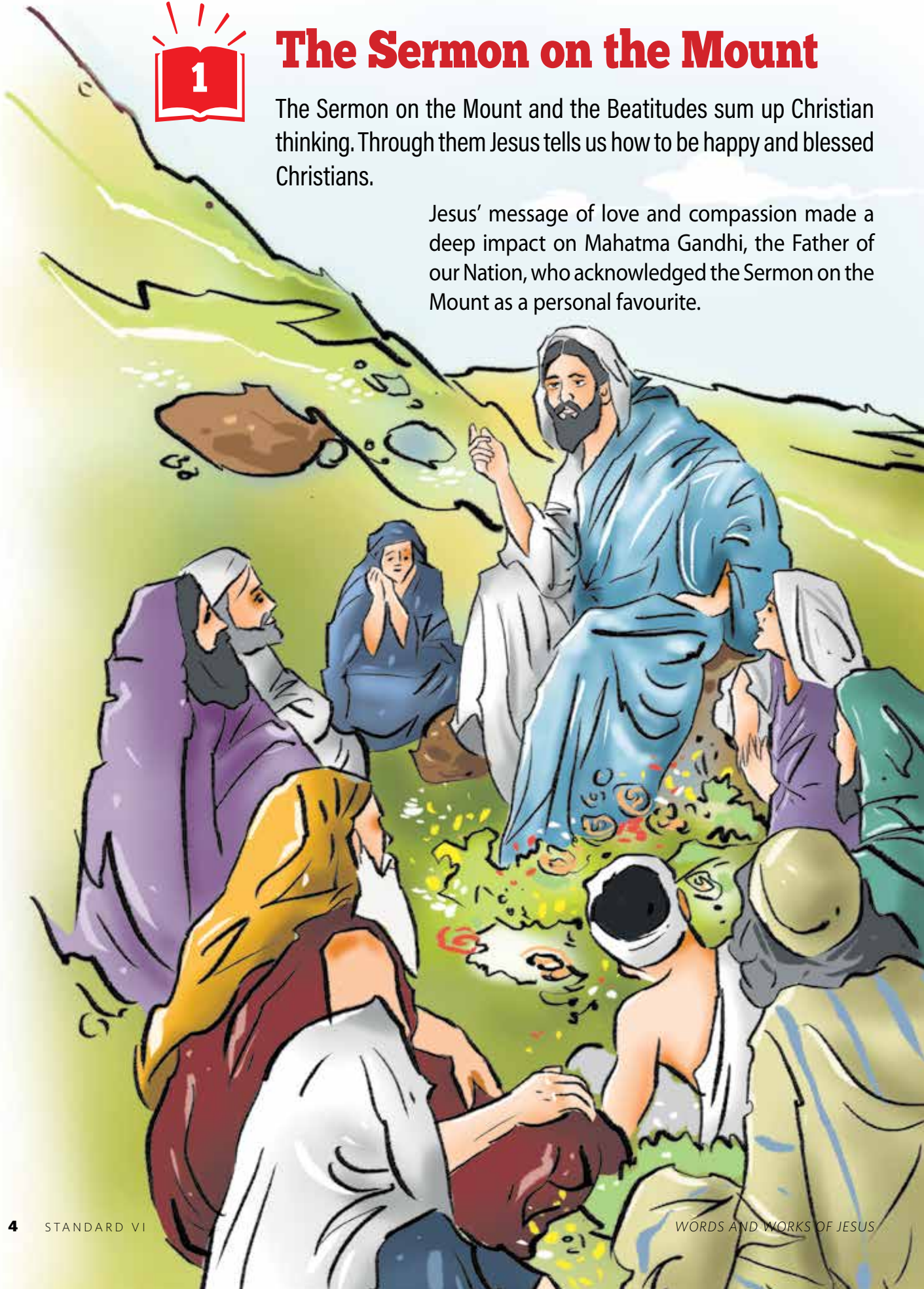




The Sermon on the Mount

The Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes sum up Christian thinking. Through them Jesus tells us how to be happy and blessed Christians.

Jesus' message of love and compassion made a deep impact on Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, who acknowledged the Sermon on the Mount as a personal favourite.



BEATITUDES

Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Happy are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Happy are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Happy are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Happy are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Happy are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Happy are they who are persecuted for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“The Sermon on the Mount was the whole of Christianity for him who wanted to live a Christian life. It is that Sermon which has endeared Jesus to me,” said Mahatma Gandhi in 1931 while speaking at a Christmas celebration aboard a ship sailing to India from London.

Jesus chose the Mount of Beatitudes, located on the north-western shores of the Sea of Galilee with a beautiful view of the villages of Capernaum and Tabgha, to give the Beatitudes, perhaps because this hill shaped into a hollow served as a natural amphitheatre.

The Beatitudes appear in Matthew’s Gospel following the temptation of Jesus in the desert where He fasted for forty days and forty nights. The devil tried to tempt Him, but Jesus did not fall for his tricks. During these forty days, Jesus was in constant communication and reflection with His heavenly Father resulting in the Beatitudes.

The Palestine where Jesus lived and preached was ruled by the Romans; hence the Jews were in continuous sorrow and suffering under the foreign rulers. It is in such a context that Jesus gave the Beatitudes, offering renewed hope, eternal truth and everlasting happiness for entire humankind.

Jesus also taught us the “Our Father,” a prayer that seeks ‘daily bread’, teaches us to ask for God’s forgiveness and also to forgive others. There is something else God gave us on a mountain: The Ten Commandments. These were handed over to Moses on Mount Sinai. In a way, the Eight Beatitudes are like the Ten Commandments, guiding us on the path to becoming true Christians.

